

**PRACTICE
FOR
ELEMENTARY COMPREHENSION**

Comprehension – “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, p.11).

Scaffolding Reading Comprehension in the Elementary Grades

The amount and type of scaffolding is dependent upon the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading.

Before Reading

- Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words.
- Teach the meaning of critical, unknown vocabulary words.
- Teach or activate any necessary background knowledge.
- Preview the story or the article.

During Reading

- Utilize passage reading procedures that provide adequate reading practice.
- Ask appropriate questions during passage reading.
- Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading.
- Use graphic organizers to enhance comprehension. (In some cases, use after passage reading.)

After Reading

- Provide intentional fluency building practice.
- Engage students in a discussion.
- Have students answer written questions.
- Provide engaging vocabulary practice.
- Have students write summaries of what they have read.

Anita L. Archer, Ph.D.

Follow the Leader

A group of sandhill cranes made their first flight last fall by learning to follow the leader. But their leader was not another crane. The birds followed a scientist who flew a small airplane.

Sandhill Cranes Soar South

Eleven sandhill cranes flew from Wisconsin to Florida last fall. The birds followed a scientist flying a small airplane on the 39-day trip.

Each fall, cranes travel from cold areas, like Wisconsin, to warm areas, like Florida. Baby cranes learn from their parents how to make the trip. But these cranes learned to follow scientists.

When the sandhill cranes hatched, the first thing they saw was a group of scientists dressed to look like adult cranes. The scientists fed the chicks. The chicks thought the scientists were their mothers.

Then the scientists trained the young birds to follow an airplane. The scientists played a tape of the noise that planes make. They also played sounds adult sandhill cranes make. So the cranes learned to trust and follow people in planes.

Cranes Helping Cranes

By flying to Florida, 11 sandhill cranes were helping their cousins, the whooping cranes. Many sandhill cranes live in the United States. But few whooping cranes live here anymore.

Only one group of whooping cranes knows how to migrate, or travel, from the North to the South. Scientists hope to teach other whooping cranes to migrate. More cranes may survive if they can learn to travel back and forth.

Next year, scientists will train whooping cranes to migrate the same way they trained sandhill cranes.

Copyright © 2003 Weekly Reader Corp. All Rights Reserved.

Teach Background Knowledge

Sandhill Cranes





In the fall, Sandhill Cranes fly South to warmer places.



Some young Sandhill Cranes were taught to follow an airplane South.



These are whooping cranes.

There are fewer and fewer whooping cranes in the United States.



Some young Whooping Cranes also learned to follow an airplane to warmer places.

Teach the Pronunciation of the Words

Tell students the pronunciation of words.

group

area

science

scientist

learn

learned

Guide students in using decoding strategies.

crane

cranes

sandhill cranes

whooping cranes

tape

migrate

hope

follow

following

fly

flying

train

trained

survive

travel

airplane

Wisconsin

Florida

trust

noise

Selection of Vocabulary

Select 5 words from this list for robust vocabulary instruction.

cranes

whooping cranes

sandhill cranes

airplane

travel

migrate

scientist

flying

survive

learned

thought

followed

trained

young

Writing Student Friendly Explanations

Word	Definition	Student-Friendly Explanation
train trained	Teach a particular skill or type of behavior through practice and instruction over a period of time.	When you teach an animal to do something, you train the animal.
follow followed	Go or come after a person or thing proceeding ahead.	
travel traveled	Make a journey typically of some length or abroad.	
migrate migrated	Move from one region or habitat to another especially regularly according to the seasons.	
survive survived	Continue to live or exist, especially in spite of danger or hardship.	

Teaching Critical Vocabulary

Example A.

1. Introduce the word.

*This word is **travel**. What word?*

2. Present a student-friendly explanation.

*When a person or an animal goes from one place to another, they **travel**. So when a person or an animal goes from one place to another place they _____. The word travel is usually used when the person or animal goes a long distance.*

3. Illustrate the word with examples.

If you went from Albuquerque to Denver in an airplane, you would _____.

If you drove from Atlanta to Boston in a car, you would _____.

4. Check students' understanding.

(Deep processing question.)

Why might a family travel to another city? Tell your partner. (The teacher calls on an individual.)

(Generate examples.)

Tell your partner some place that you and your family have traveled to. (Teacher monitors.)

Example B.

1. Introduce the word.

*This word is **migrate**. What word?*

2. Present a student-friendly explanation.

*When birds or other animals move from one place to another at a certain time each year, they **migrate**. So if birds move to a new place in the winter or spring, we say that the birds migrate.*

3. Illustrate the word with examples.



These birds are moving to a warmer place for the winter months. These birds _____.



These wildebeests in Africa are moving to a new place so that they can find water and grass. Wildebeests _____.

4. Check students' understanding.

(Deep processing question.)

Why might birds migrate? Tell your partner. (The teacher calls on an individual.)

Example C.

1. Introduce the word.

*This word is **survive**. What word?*

2. Present a student-friendly explanation.

*When people or animals don't die when things are very bad, they **survive**.*

3. Illustrate the word with examples.



Look at the people on this river. It is very dangerous. However, they don't get hurt or die, they _____.

4. Check students' understanding.

(Examples and non-examples.)

Get ready to tell me if this group would survive.

If the winter was very cold and all food was buried under the snow, would whooping cranes survive? Why not?

If whooping cranes had plenty of food and the weather was warm, would they survive? Why?

(Deep Processing Questions)

If a rabbit was being chased by a coyote, what could the rabbit do to survive?

Questions Follow the Leader

A group of sandhill cranes made their first flight last fall by learning to follow the leader. But their leader was not another crane. The birds followed a scientist who flew a small airplane.

Sandhill Cranes Soar South

Eleven sandhill cranes flew from Wisconsin to Florida last fall. The birds followed a scientist flying a small airplane on the 39-day trip.

Each fall, cranes travel from cold areas, like Wisconsin, to warm areas, like Florida. Baby cranes learn from their parents how to make the trip. But these cranes learned to follow scientists.

When the sandhill cranes hatched, the first thing they saw was a group of scientists dressed to look like adult cranes. The scientists fed the chicks. The chicks thought the scientists were their mothers.

Then the scientists trained the young birds to follow an airplane. The scientists played a tape of the noise that planes make. They also played sounds adult sandhill cranes make. So the cranes learned to trust and follow people in planes.

Cranes Helping Cranes

By flying to Florida, 11 sandhill cranes were helping their cousins, the whooping cranes. Many sandhill cranes live in the United States. But few whooping cranes live here anymore.

Only one group of whooping cranes knows how to migrate, or travel, from the North to the South. Scientists hope to teach other whooping cranes to migrate. More cranes may survive if they can learn to travel back and forth.

Next year, scientists will train whooping cranes to migrate the same way they trained sandhill cranes.